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ABSTRACT

Teachers can take effective schoolwide leadership roles if the principal encourages each teacher to take responsibility for an aspect of school life that the individual teacher cares strongly about. Such opportunities to engage in school leadership are attractive for teachers because (1) they offer possibilities for improving teaching conditions; (2) they replace the solitary authority of the principal with a collective authority; (3) they provide a constructive format in which the school's adults can interact and overcome their daily classroom isolation; (4) they help transform schools into learning contexts for adults as well as for children; and (5) they make teachers feel and become more important and professional in the eyes of students, other teachers, parents, administrators, and themselves. To encourage teachers to take leadership roles, principals should (1) make it clear that they want to see a community of leaders develop; (2) relinquish some power; (3) support the teachers to whom responsibility has been delegated; (4) involve teachers in decision making; (5) give responsibility not to teachers already proven responsible, but to teachers interested in the issues concerned; (6) accept a share of the responsibility for failures while allowing the teacher credit for successes; (7) admit their needs for help; and (8) seek ways to enhance their own self-confidence. Reviewing the experiences of small, democratically-organized schools around the country can provide insight into how communities of leadership can be developed. (PGD)

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SCHOOL: A COMMUNITY OF LEADERS

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SCHOOL: A COMMUNITY OF LEADERS

Roland S. Barth

> ...And one day, lying alone on the lawn on my back, hearing only the moan and groan of some far off train on a distant track, I saw above me, 2,000 feet or more, something to which this day, I must say, I've never seen anything like before. The head goose, the leader of the V, suddenly swerved out, leaving a vacancy that promptly filled by the bird behind. The leader then flew along side, the formation growing wide, and took his place at the back of the line -- and they never missed a beat!![1]

For many years I have been developing a personal vision of the school in which I would like to be principal or teacher. Not surprisingly, this is also the school which I would like my daughters to attend. Mine is a personal vision, a conception of what might be, what could be, perhaps what should be, rather than a projection of what will be. I find the continuous exercise of vision-making engaging, fun, often useful, and above all, hopeful. Those of us who work in or near public schools need hope.

A few months ago I heard a teacher from Maine, recite from memory an unusual and haunting poem, a portion of which appears above. In the poem, two important ideas emerge -- leadership and community -- which gave me a name for an element of my personal vision I had been struggling to clarify and articulate. It was not difficult to transform the metaphor "geese: a community of leaders" into "school: a community of leaders."

Like most of us I have been reading some of the recent national reports. I find that the concept of a school as a community of leaders has become both fashionable, and

controversial. It appears that concern about the relationship between teacher and principal, around school-wide decision making, will be with us for a good while. I hope so.

For instance, the California Commission on the Teaching Profession[2] relates shared school leadership to strengthening the teaching profession. The Carnegie Forum's[3] proposal for "lead teachers" calls upon principals to share authority with teachers so together they can redesign schools to become free of bureaucracy and create a career path for the more capable. Recently, the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP) also announced the creation of a program to help urban high school principals involve their faculties in instructional improvement and give teachers a more integral role in curriculum revision, program planning, designation of individual and school objectives. These studies suggest that teachers aren't much involved as leaders in their schools; that it would be good for teachers and their schools if they were; that many would like them to be more involved; and that it's possible for principals to learn how to involve them.

Unfortunately, well intentioned efforts to involve teachers in decision making have exacerbated tensions between union and management, between teacher and principal. Teachers and their associations have responded with anger that it has taken so long to include them, suspicion that they are being tricked, and confidence that the revolution is now at hand.

The national professional principals associations have

responded defensively to the idea that teachers might "lead" schools. So has the American Association of School Administrators which recently issued a policy statement which cautiously "...encourages schools and districts to establish formal procedures that will promote appropriate involvement of teachers in decision making." This would take place under the direction of a "strong, effective principal. Substituting a lead teacher or a committee of teachers for the principal is unacceptable."[4]

A stronger reaction from administrators has led to a lawsuit in Rochester, New York where a program had been created for mentor teachers with no teaching duties who would spend all their time helping improve the teaching skills of first year teachers and tenured teachers experiencing difficulty. According to the president of the local administrative association which filed the suit, "this program encroaches on the job of those currently involved in the evaluation process."[5] The suit asks that mentor teachers teach students, be removed from evaluating new teachers and be evaluated themselves on their own teaching by principals. Far from lead geese moving back from the head of the line to allow others a turn at leading, attempts to rearrange decision-making within a school seems to be ruffling feathers.

For several years thanks to mastery learning, the effective schools literature, and the concept of high expectations, most of us have been seeing and saying "all children can learn." Initially many teachers, principals, parents, even children were skeptical. Now the belief that "all children can learn" is widespread and the implications for instruction and students has become profound.

When I was working to establish the Harvard Principals' Center six years ago, I based my efforts on different assumptions: every principal is very good at something; there are other principals who would like to know and to be able to do that; and, principals can convey their important craft knowledge about staff development, parent involvement, discipline, or managing the lunch room to one another. In short I believed that "all principals can learn" and that "all principals can teach." Many were skeptical of these preposterous propositions. Some university people, superintendents, parents, teachers, students, and even principals might still take exception. Yet, the conviction that principals have substantial professional knowledge which is of immense value to others in improving schools and that they can convey these insights to their colleagues is also having profound implications for principals, for their professional development, and for the improvement of their schools, as the formation of principal centers around the world attests.

I would like to suggest another astonishing proposition:

"all teachers can lead." Skeptics might say "some teachers", or "a few" or even "many". But there is an important part of the life and work of the entire school that every teacher is good at, wants to become good at, and can become good at. A classroom teacher is no more "just a teacher" than Corazon Aquino is "just a housewife". Teachers harbor extraordinary leadership capabilities and their leadership is a major tapped resource for improving our nation's schools. All teachers can lead. The world will come to accept that all teachers can lead, as many now accept "all children can learn" and "all principals can teach" if we can overcome the many impediments facing teachers and principals which block teachers leading, and if we can find conditions under which teachers will exercise that leadership.

As principal, I used to think I shared leadership. I did. Or I should say I went as far as I could go or felt the school could go. But reflecting on my leadership a decade later, I see that I stopped well short of a community of leaders. Leadership for me was delegating, giving away or sharing participation in important decisions to others so long as the curriculum, pupil achievement, staff development and of course stability were not much altered. Now I see it differently. School is a place where leadership by teachers is not only tolerated, where some teachers might be leaders in some important school wide endeavors. Rather, my vision for a school is a place whose very mission is to ensure that students, parents, teachers and principals all become school leaders in some ways and at some times. Leadership

is making happen what you believe in. Everyone deserves a chance. Schools can help all adults and youngsters who reside there learn how to earn and enjoy the recognition, satisfaction, and influence which comes from serving the common interest as well as one's self-interest.

I would like to consider the idea of a school as a community of leaders by examining particularly what teachers and principals might do there.

TEACHERS AS LEADERS

Shortly after my arrival as principal of an elementary school, a veteran teacher sent me a memo indicating his intention to stay out of school until the "deplorable and illegal fire safety standards have been corrected." A challenge to the new authority? Perhaps. An unwelcome hassel from an unexpected quarter? Perhaps. And an opportunity. Perhaps.

In a long talk with the teacher his energy, and concern for the safety of children as well as his anger emerged. At the conclusion of the conversation I asked him if he would accept responsibility for the fire standards of the entire school and assume the position of "fire marshall". All of the responsibility. He was appropriately auspicious. The next day he agreed. I gave him the key to the fire alarm system and pledged my support for any plan he proposed. I asked that he consult with me from time to time as his plan developed.

Somehow, in addition to his full time teaching responsibilities, he began to devise a most school incredible

school fire safety system. He met with each class and teacher and talked about the seriousness of fire in a fifty year old brick and wooden building full of papers and people. He held a drill for each class, established a route of exit, and assessed with teacher and students how the drill had gone, what could be improved, and how long it took to evacuate the building. Then he announced the first school-wide fire drill. The Fire Chief from the city attended and watched in wonderment as 450 children and 30-some adults cleared the building quickly, quietly, and orderly. He informed the fire officials that he was concerned by how long it took them and their equipment to reach the school. He told them that once a year he would call a drill, and time the officials to see how quickly they could respond!

Furthermore, he reasoned that in the event of a real fire, especially during the long New England winter, the population of the school (many without shoes and coats) would have to stand in the snow and freezing cold for an indetermined time. This was unacceptable. He visited a nearby church and made arrangements with the pastor to secure a key. During the next drill the entire school filed into predetermined pews of the church. I shall never forget his solemn assessment from the altar of the process.

Unusual lengths to go for safety? A pathological obsession about fires? Too much time spent off "the basics"? Most of us would rather have our own children in a school which took safety this seriously than the one which had been operating the previous

year...or the school in which I tried to administer fire safety along with everything else.

When teachers are enlisted and empowered as school leaders everyone can win. Other teachers' concerns are frequently better understood by one of their fellows than be someone who performs a different job. Important school-wide issues receive more care and attention when the adult responsible is responsible for no other major areas. And the principal wins by recognizing that there is plenty of leadership to go around. If the principal tries to do all of it, much of it will be left undone by anyone. Leadership is not a zero sums game in which one person gets some only when another loses some. The principal demonstrates leadership by entrusting some of it to others. And important needs of the teacher-leader may be met. In this case, the teacher's rapport with the faculty improved. He was dubbed "Sparky" and at an end of year faculty meeting awarded a shiny new red fireman's hat (the kind about which 8 year old boys dream at Christmas) on which was emblazoned "Chief". Recognition that he <u>was</u> chief. Of something. Other teachers can become chief of something too. And, were each of 30 teachers to become chief of something, a school would be well along the path toward a community of leaders.

But vision and hope must be juxtaposed with reality. Schools are complicated places. Decisions are made by many people in many places at hundreds of different choice points. Teachers are involved at many levels in important school-wide decisions, often teachers make decisions which others presume they make. Some teachers are not involved. Some are asked for information which provides data for administrators to decide. Some are consulted for their recommendations while administrators make the decisions. Some make the decision and administrators are informed. And sometimes teachers and administrators together make important decisions.

But many teachers and principals feel that teaching and leadership are mutually exclusive. One visitor to a school who was interested in leadership asked to "shadow" a teacher for a day. "I'm not a leader. I'm just a teacher. If you want to see leadership go shadow the principal," said the teacher. To be a leader is to be an administrator. That all teachers lead within their classrooms does not seem to count. Leadership happens among adults. It is commonly held that if you are a teacher the only way to become a leader is to leave teaching.

There may be few opportunities for teachers to offer school-wide leadership. Others may not feel it possible. Yet for more teachers the question is "why would I want to lead anyway? Shut the door and leave me alone." As one principal put it, "teachers in my building don't want more participation." Most teachers already feel overwhelmed and overworked. Teachers spend vast

quantities of time and energy beyond their work hours correcting papers, repairing what happened today and preparing for what may happen tomorrow. An opportunity for leadership is an opportunity to deplete more time and energy. The opportunity for teachers to run meetings and manage fire drills are peculiar opportunities, indeed. The would be teacher-leader seeks fulfillment and satisfaction but more often encounters committee work, meetings, conflict. Already bombarded with interpersonal overload, few teachers are eager to accept such "opportunities".

Furthermore, if a teacher does add to classroom work, responsibility for fire safety, the teacher risks being viewed by fellow teachers as "special", "favored", "opportunistic", or even "uppitidy". The culture of schools exacts cruel and unusual penalties for teachers who violate the taboo against wanting to distinguish themselves, distinguising themselves, or even appearing to distinguish themselves in the eyes of their peers. The culture of most schools does not expect, value or reward leadership from teachers.

When others are deciding, teachers can resist, lobby, hold out, and in inventive ways attempt to influence a situation to their own advantage. When teachers work for the common good they give up a large measure of self-interest in the outcome. With leadership and responsibility comes the need to see others' points of view, and act fairly in their eyes. Many teachers are not willing to make this trade.

And, as principals know, no decision pleases everyone. Any

decision displeases someone. Why would teachers want to engender the wrath of their fellows? Let the principal do it. That's what he's paid for. And, given the distance in many places between union and management, why should a teacher do what an administrator is supposed to do, thereby lightening the load of the adversary and increasing one's own? As one teacher put it, "to go across" can be debilitating.

Furthermore, the kinds of issues and decisions in which teachers are invited to participate are often ones which call not for leadership but for management. Taking responsibility to run fire drills is an important school-wide issue. But what import does this work have for the otherwise busy teacher? On the other hand, instructional leadership, the decisions which have to do with what is taught, using which materials, allocating what funds, are the decisions most teachers would like a hand in. And so would the principal and central office. All the bees flock to the best nectar. The teachers usually lose.

The rewards of leadership then, so treasured in the eyes of teachers, are often illusory, no more immediate and satisfying for teachers than for principals. For most teachers the school world is the world within the classroom. Teaching. Because "every teacher can lead" clearly does not mean that every teacher wants to lead, should lead, should be expected or required to lead.

There is a touch of irony in the fact that those in history who have been most widely celebrated as "teachers" have also been

leaders. Socrates, Plato, Jesus, Moses, Ghandi are all names synonymous with teaching and leading. But teacher-leadership is clearly not a common contemporary condition. Why, then, did Sparky agree to serve as school fire marshall? Why, for that matter, would any teacher choose to engage in serious, sustained school leadership?

Public policy makers respond that opportunities for teachers to lead will attract more able people to the profession. And by engaging teachers in leadership activities, the very able, empowered, enobled and challenged, will choose to remain in teaching.

Others argue that leadership opportunities will bring out the best from teachers; and the very best from teachers will bring out the very best from their students. Teacher leadership will raise pupil achievement. Time for Results: The Governors 1991 Report on Education,[6] for instance, offers less regulation of teachers if they will provide leadership at the school level and accept responsibility for student achievement.

The literature from successful businesses, from Japan to IBM, offers evidence that when workers participate in decision making their satisfaction and the quality of their work rises. Teacher-leaders too, it is reasoned, will become more invested in the school and in its success. By sharing leadership, teachers will feel more ownership and commitment to the implementation of decisions. And by providing teachers with leadership opportunities one accords them recognition. Therefore, they will

work harder and better and longer. In short, research suggests that the greater the participation in decision-making, the productivity, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment.

That's why policy makers and businessmen would have teachers lead. But, given the reasons "why not" suggested above, why would any <u>teacher</u> want a hand in major school decisions? One teacher put it this way:

> What is the passion I have for education? The classroom experience. That is what I love. On reflecting upon it I realized that I love my own experience; that which occurs within the walls of my room and with students I call mine. What happens in my room, I like to think is quality learning. What happens outside my room has very little to do with me. And that, quite simply, is what's wrong with public schools.

Another teacher put it differently: "the concept of teacher-leader ought not to be such a difficult one to accept. After all, teachers are leaders in the classroom every day. There is no reason why the skills of the classroom cannot be transferred to areas of the school life outside the classroom."

And another said,

> Teachers are leaders every day in dozens of ways. We provide educational direction and create the kind of educational environments we believe in for our students. We work with other teachers to create new curriculum or to consult on problems we have with students. We work with parents in reflecting on their children's development and by providing information about academic matters. We voice matters of concern for ourselves, our colleagues, our students and administrators, and frequently initiate major programmatic changes in our schools.

> To assert one's leadership as a teacher, often against forces of administrative resistance, takes commitment to an educational ideal. It also requires the energy to combat one's own inertia caused by habit and overwork. And it requires a certain kind of courage to step outside of the small prescribed circle of traditional "teacher tasks", to declare through our actions that we care about and take responsibility for more than the minimum, more than what goes on in the four walls of our classrooms.

Many teachers feel then that no matter how fulfilling, how important, and how successful the work within classrooms, there is more to teaching.

Other teachers become concerned about the whole school because they think "if only someone will." When "someone doesn't" for long enough, they become the "someone." They are propelled from classroom to school leadership by anger.

> I've thought about my own development as a school leader, it was clearly anger which pushed me out on the leadership "limb." Put another way, anger provided the adrenalin which made it possible for me to take the risk of assuming a leadership role. Moreover, beyond the initial "push", anger fueled the courage to persist in a leadership role which was often uncomfortable, unpleasant and unfamiliar. For me then, anger both precipitated and sustained my role as a faculty leader. Anger enabled me to find my voice and compelled me to speak out publicly. Speaking publicly, in turn, required that I channel my anger into constructive and articulate criticisms of and challenges to my principal's policies and decisions.

When no one is looking after the lunchroom or someone is botching it up, a teacher has several options: retreat to the classroom and close the door, pretend the problem the does not exist; bitch about it to whomever will listen; leave the school for one with a well run lunchroom; or take some responsibility

for reforming the lunchroom. Because the former courses usually have no effect on the lunchroom, the latter for many teachers becomes a compelling alternative. Often in schools the followership colludes to create leadership where none exists.

And many teachers want to lead for precisely the reasons others do not. They derive respect, if not acclaim, from other teachers for their efforts; they derive energy from leadership activities which fuels, rather than depletes, their classroom activities; by leading, they find they can more fully understand the points of view of other teachers and administrators; they enjoy meetings and interactions with other adults as well as with children; they find they learn by leading, that leadership offers profound possibilities for one's professional development; and they aspire to distinguish themselves with respect to their peers.

In short, opportunities to engage in school leadership is attractive for Sparky and other teachers because it offers possibilities for improving teaching conditions; it replaces the solitary authority of the principal with a collective authority; it provides a constructive format in which adults can interact which overcomes daily classroom isolation; it helps transform schools into contexts for adult as well as children's learning. And teacher leadership makes teachers feel and become more important and professional in the eyes of students, other teachers, parents, administrators, and their own.

THE PRINCIPAL AND A COMMUNITY OF LEADERS

Principals, by virtue of the authority of their position are seen as school leaders. Recently I participated in a lengthy conversation about shared leadership with an elementary school principal and a junior high school principal.[7] We agreed on several assumptions about teachers as leaders: all teachers have leadership tendencies; schools badly need teachers' leadership; teachers badly need to exercise that leadership; teachers' leadership has not been forthcoming; the principal has been at the center of both successes and failures of teachers' leadership; and principals who are most successful as leaders themselves are somehow able to enlist teachers in providing leadership for the entire school.

What can principals do to develop a community of leaders within a school? What do principals do which thwarts the development of teacher leadership? What do principals do which makes the emergence of school leadership from teachers more likely?

Articulate the Goal

In order to move a school from where it is to where one's vision would have it be it is necessary to convey what the vision is. This is risky. Many principals may not be sure of what their vision is. They may not want to face faculty and parental

dissonance which might surface if they shared their vision. They may not want to expose their thinking to the central office which may not see the connection between say, "a community of leaders" and minimum competence in three place multiplication. Consequently, few administrators telegraph their vision to the school community, preferring to believe that "they'll figure it out." A community of leaders and the involvement of teachers and students in school leadership is more likely to occur when the principal openly articulates this goal in meetings, conversations, newsletters, faculty memos and community meetings.

Relinquish

There are short lists and long lists of the behaviors of "effective principals". They include continuous monitoring of performance, exercising strong leadership, and involving parents. One state had extracted 91 different behaviors of the successful principal. I have never seen on such a list the "ability to relinquish." And yet there are too many school-wide responsibilities for any principal to handle. Most principals have in their bottom drawer a few marbles of authority that come with their appointment and even more that they earn over time. Some principals try to play these marbles alone. Others don't play at all, making few decisions themselves and allowing others to make even fewer. I think it best to have all the marbles played by as many players as possible. But many principals already feel they have too little power over a tottering building. To convey any to others is illogical. It is against

human nature for us to relinquish power when we will probably be held accountable for what others do with it. One should accumulate and consolidate, not relinquish. This leads to the common belief that "I cannot leave my building." Perhaps the most important item in the list of characteristics of effective principals is the capacity to relinquish, so the latent, creative powers of teachers may be released.

Empower and Entrust

It is important for a principal to relinquish decision-making authority to teachers. But the teacher will not become a leader of the school community if, when the going gets tough and the angry phone call comes from a parent, the principal violates the trust and re-asserts authority over the issue. It takes only a few incidents where the rug is pulled from beneath a teacher's leadership before teachers cecede from the community of leaders. The principal must bet on a horse and have the courage and trust to stick with it and help it finish. To change the bet in the middle of the race is to create conditions under which everyone loses.

Involve Teachers Before Decisions are Made

It is common in the world of teachers and principals for a problem, like inadequate fire safety, to emerge, the principal to quickly reach a solution (bringing in the fire chief to lecture students and teachers) and then invite a teacher to "handle" the situation. This is an opportunity for maintenance, not leadership, which few teachers will embrace. The energy, the

fun, the commitment around leadership comes from brainstorming one's own solutions and then trying to implement them. For a community of leaders to develop, tough important problems need to be conveyed to teachers before, not after, the principal has played them out several squares.

Which Responsibility Goes To Whom?

Wanting desperately to resolve a problem for the school and oneself, the principal often selects a responsible, trusted teacher who has successfully handled similar problems. But, by relying on the tried and proven teacher, the principal rewards competence with additional hard work. It will be only a matter of time before the overburdened teacher burns out, concluding that if one is going to act like an assistant principal one might as well be paid like an assistant principal, and leaves teaching. Other oft chosen teachers will one day declare "I'm drowning and I must return my attentions to the classroom. I'm sorry I can't do it."

The better match, as in Sparky's case, may be between an important school issue and a teacher who feels passionately about that issue. For one teacher it's the fire safety. For another the supply closet. While another would favor reforming the science curriculum, finding both fire safety and the supply closet menial tasks, not leadership opportunities. Teacher leadership is less a question of according trusted teachers responsibility for important issues than of ensuring that all teachers are given ownership for a responsibility about which

they care deeply. One person's junk is another person's treasure.

Reliance upon a few proven teachers for school-wide leadership also excludes the majority of untried teachers from the community of leaders, contributing to divisiveness and leaving little of a community. For Sparky, the opportunity to have the "key" had far more meaning than for other teachers who had been offered and accepted many keys. His inclusion expanded the community by one.

Too often the criterion for bestowal of the "key" of leadership is evidence that you know how to do it. Yet, the innovative solutions, the fun, the energy comes more often from teachers who don't know how to do it but want to learn how. This is where leadership and staff development intersect. The moment of greatest learning for any of us is when we are responsible for a problem which we care desperately to resolve. Then we need and seek out assistance. We are ready to learn. At this moment the principal here has a responsibility and an opportunity to assist the teacher in developing leadership skills and finding success with responsibility. Mere delegation or "being kept informed" is not sufficient involvement on the principal's part for the development of a community of leaders. Unsuccessful leaders do not make a community of leaders. Most teachers, like most principals, need assistance in becoming successful school leaders. The principal who supports and teaches the "beginning school leader," assumes a burden of considerable time and

patience. "It would be easier and quicker to handle it myself." Yet, this is what is really meant by shared leadership. It is interactive, interdependent.

By turning for leadership to untried and perhaps untrusted teachers who express a passionate interest in an issue, as Sparky did, everyone can win. The overburdened teacher receives no further burden; the teacher who displays excitement about an issue is enlisted in the growing community of leaders. The teacher comes alive as an adult learner, as well as leader. And I think the principal wins. If the principal this year can help annoint, induct and support the initial efforts of teacher-leaders, those efforts will be rewarded next year by a level of independence when much less will be needed from the principal.

Shared Responsibility for Failure

If the principal conveys responsibility to a teacher for an important school-wide issue and the teacher stumbles, the principal has several options. Blame the teacher. "I entrusted leadership and authority for fire safety to Sparky and he blew it. Now I'll find someone who can do it better or I'll do it myself." This may protect the principal in the short run, but in the long run neither Sparky nor other teachers will choose to play again. Without the provision of a safety net by the principal, few teachers will aspire to walk the high wire. No community of leaders. Or the principal, can become the lone lightening rod. "I am captain of the ship, it has gone aground. I assume responsibility," a needlessly lonely and self-punative

position.

If the principal bets on this horse and it runs poorly, "we" are responsible, for together we have given our best efforts. Both have something of importance to them and the school which bonds them. Responsibility for failure is shared. Usually the world of schools deals more kindly with mistakes made by a coalition of teacher and administrator than when either errs alone. Additionally, the important question to ask is not "who's fault is it?" but "what happened, what can we learn from it and how might we do it better next time?" The principal who occupies a fox hole with a teacher has hope for developing collegiality, staff development, and morale. There is much then, to be gained by both teacher and principal from failing together.

The Teacher Enjoys Responsibility for Success

Whereas it is important to the development of a community of leaders that failures be shared by teacher and principal, I think it equally important that success reflect upon the teacher, not the principal. The principal has many visible occasions during the school day and year to be the "hero." Running the assembly, coming in over the loud speaker, sending the notice to parents, meeting with the press about the National Merit Finalists. For the teacher there are precious few opportunities to expect and enjoy recognition from the school community. For the principal to hog or share the limelight is to reduce the meaning of the recognition for the teacher and make less likely continuation of membership in the community of leaders.

School-wide success replenishes the teacher personally and professionally. I have seen classroom performance, morale, commitment to teaching, and relationships with colleagues all benefit from public recognition.

Additionally, teachers should enjoy the success because they have done most of the work. My part in the fire safety plan occupied a fraction of the time Sparky put in. Mine were prime minutes but there were few of them.

Principals, of course, have their own needs for success and recognition which often impede the development of a community of leaders. But in the long run, teacher success begats further teacher leadership and success. The school improves. And the principal justly comes in for ample credit as "the one who pulled it off." Everyone wins.

All Teachers Can Lead

Just as high expectations that "all children can learn" have been associated with unexpected learning on the part of children whose race, social class, and family background might not predict achievement, high expectations on the part of principals that all teachers can be responsible, committed school leaders, makes more likely emergence of leadership tendencies which all teachers possess.

How might expectations of principals for teachers as leaders be raised and conveyed? Principals can articulate a community of leaders as a goal, look for and celebrate examples in other schools or in one's own school.

Embedding in a principal's conception of leadership the idea that all teachers can lead has a lot to do with the ways schools respond to differences. Just as I would like to see our distain for differences among students replaced by the question, "how can we make use of the differences for the powerful learning opportunity they hold," I would like to see our distain in schools for differences among teachers and compulsion for eliminating them replaced with the question, "how can we deliberately make use of differences among teachers to provide leadership for the school?" The teacher interested in restoring fire safety is different in many ways from the teacher who would turn the library into a media center. Differences of philosophy, style, and passion, are remarkable sources for school leadership.

I Don't Know How

The foregoing discussion about principals helping teachers become citizens of a community of leaders implies that the principal knows how to do it but for a variety of reasons would like teachers to do it. I probably could have handled the problem of fire safety. Yet, principals who always know how to do it perpetuate what one referred to as "the burden of presumed competence." A principal is hired from among a hundred candidates because the selection committee supposes he or she knows how to do it. Thereafter, for principals to admit they don't know how is a sign of weakness, at best and incompetence at worst. Many principals succumb to the "burden of presumed competence" by pretending, sometimes even convincing themselves

they know how. This can kill the development of a community of leaders. The invitation for a teacher to take on fire safety may often be framed then as a veiled challenge to see if the teacher can do it as well as the principal. Competition on the part of teacher to exceed the principal's knowledge and skills in turn engenders a wish on the part of the principal that the teacher fail. School leadership then becomes an occasion to renew adversarial relationship all too latent among teachers and principals.

Teachers know that principals don't know how to do it all. What happens when a principal initiates conversations with a teacher by announcing, "I've never set up a fire safety system before. I've got some ideas, but I don't know how." I don't know how. This declaration by the principal becomes a powerful invitation to teachers. It suggests that the principal and school needs help and that the teacher can provide the help. And it gives the teacher room to risk not knowing how either and perhaps to fail. Or the teacher can emerge a genuinely helpful leader of the school and friend and colleague of the principal. "I don't know how" is an attractive, disarming, and realistic invitation likely to be accepted and handled with responsibility.

Personal Security

These suggestions for teacher and principal to move a school towards a community of leaders, imply a level of personal security on the part of both principal and teacher. For the

principal to publically articulate a personal vision, relinquish control, empower and entrust teachers, involve teachers early, accord responsibility to untried and aspiring teacher-leaders, share responsibility for teacher failure, accord resonsibility to teachers for success and have confidence that all teachers can lead, a principal has to be a secure person willing to take risks. Security of the principal, above all else, is a precondition upon which development of a community of leaders rests. With some measure of personal security these ideas have plausability, without security they have little.

The security of principals might be influenced in several ways. During the pre-service preparation of the aspiring principal, including certification requirements, university course work, and peer interaction, the concept of a community of leaders might be introduced, so that candidates might become familiar and comfortable with this idea.

The manner in which principals are selected for the position tends to be a byzantine process. Criteria are put forth and decisions made on the basis of a host of factors usually determined within the school district. Seldom is "personal security" among them. Yet, interview techniques, written and oral instruments exist which might help identify this important quality.

The third and perhaps most promising point of possible influence on principals' security occurs at the <u>in-service</u> level. Principals have as a context the school over which they preside,

a sense of the faculty's, and of the student body's differences and strengths, and fellow principals with whom to explore the unfamiliar, perhaps threatening idea of shared leadership.

But schools are organizations which suffer from scarce resources and recognition. Teachers compete with teachers; principals compete with principals; and teachers compete with principals for these precious commodities. For principals to feel sufficiently secure and in control to share control with others, their own needs for recognition, success and security, must be acknowledged and addressed.

Currently, the Program Advisory Board of the Harvard Principals' Center (made up of 18 principals, 3 university faculty members) has selected shared leadership as a focus for the spring calendar in the belief that "shared leadership expands the possibilities for school improvement, increases commitment, complicates decision-making, and makes for more effective education for children."

Two hour workshops with titles such as "Building School Coalitions"; "A Nation Prepared; Teachers for the 21st Century"; "The Principal and the Conditions of Teaching"; "A Case for Shared Leadership; The Revolution that is Overdue"; "Who Owns the Curriculum"; "School Improvement Councils"; and "Working Together for Quality Education", have occupied the attention of many principals as well as teachers. These discussions may not transform the insecure into the secure, but they have made the concept of school as a community of leaders more compelling and

less risky. It remains to be seen what will happen back in the schools.

Communities of Leaders

The vision of a school as a community of leaders is not a fantasy. Historically, the membership of the National Education Association (NEA), when it was founded in 1870, included not only teachers but as many teacher educators, principals and superintendents, all banded together in the cause of good schools.

A century later, the NEA, now a teachers' organization, has joined with the NASSP, a secondary principals' organization, to create "Ventures in Good Schooling",[8] a document which seeks collaborative schools in which the professional autonomy of teachers and managerial authority of principals are harnessed. Among the recommendations of this effort are that principals involve faculty members in decision making; teachers participate in the school budgeting process and in evaluating principals' performance; principals seek teachers' advice on staffing needs and decisions; principals and teachers jointly devise a schoolwide plan for instructional improvement and for recognizing student achievement. One promising step towards a community of leaders.

Several secondary schools, including Brookline and Andover High Schools in Massachusetts and Hanover High School in New Hampshire, have been working to create what they call "democratic schools." A town-meeting school government provides teachers and

students a structure for participating in the major decisions confronting these schools. Teachers and students join with administrators in determining policies about such matters as smoking, pupil evaluation, and use of space, so long as decisions are not illegal or in violation of school board policy. The principal has one vote in the assembly but may veto its actions, subject to an override by a 2/3 vote of the whole. These assemblies are demonstrating that it is quite possible for public schools to practice as well as teach democracy, that schools can not only teach about democracy, they can be democracies. In fact these schools raise the question whether it is possible for a school to teach democracy through non-democratic means.

Alaskan small schools are places to watch. Their isolation makes them promising laboratories uncontaminated by the rest of the world for growing all sorts of unusual cultures. For instance in Alaska, where one might routinely find K-12 school staffed by three or four adults, many educators don't know that teachers aren't supposed to be leaders. In many schools all teachers, whether called "teacher", "teaching-principal" or "principal" enjoy school-wide leadership over issues from leaky roofs to parent involvement.

And many parochial schools thrive under what is often referred to as "servant leadership" on the part of the principal or headmaster. Principals, like parish priests, lead adults by serving adults. This invariably means involving teachers in important decision of the schools. It is impossible to serve

teachers by excluding them.

Quaker schools too, have traditionally worked with great success by creating for students and adults a culture of participatory leadership, similar to the leadership of Quaker meetings. They assume that everyone has an "inner light," something to offer the group, if given the opportunity. And every member has something to learn from others. Members work together as equals, sharing ideas, planning, giving feedback, and supporting each other in new efforts. Leaders emerge in various ways at various times and then give way to other leaders.

The work and the leaderhip of the group is a responsibility and an opportunity for all, as one observer at a faculty meeting in a Massachusetts Friends school discovered:

> One teacher sat down in the large circle of staff with a box of tangled yarn which had been donated for art projects. The teacher quietly took a mass of the yarn and began winding it into a ball, while listening to and discussing staff issues. Soon the person on her left reached into the box and began unravelling and winding another ball of yarn. The person to her right did the same, and soon the yarn had spread around the circle with <u>everyone</u> winding while participating in the meeting. No one had ever said a word about the yarn.[9]

These examples suggest that it is possible for adults and students in schools to work and lead together, to everyone's benefit. A community of leaders, neither a new nor an imaginary concept, seems foreign only to the majority of public schools in this country.

Conclusion

> ... I found out that this goose can fly from way up north to way down south, and back again. But, they

Conclusion

> ... I found out that this goose can fly from way up north to way down south, and back again. But, they cannot do it alone, you see. It's something they must do in community. Oh, I know, it's a popular notion, and people swell with pride and emotion to think of themselves on the eagle side--strong, self-confident, solitary. Not bad traits. But we are what we are--that's something we can't choose. And though many of us would like to be seen as the eagle, I think God made us more like The Goose.

The relationship between teacher and principal is coming under sharp scrutiny. Shared school leadership is a timely, volatile, and I think, very promising issue for the improvement of schools, because public schools are strapped for adequate personal resources at the same time extraordinary personal resources lay unacknowledged, untapped, and undeveloped within each school house.

I have suggested a reconfiguration of the relationship between teacher and principal for the relationship among the adults who live in a school has more to do with the character and quality of the school and with the accomplishments of its students than any other factor. Students' needs won't be fully addressed until teachers and administrators together have worked out their own. Principals who faithfully monitor minimum competency, comply with district-wide curricula, carefully manage budgets and carry out the school boards' and superintendents' policies, frequently do so at the considerable expense of distancing themselves from teachers, stifling teachers' creative energies, and establishing adversarial rather than cooperative

relationships with teachers.

Top-down, hierarchical relationships foster dependency. Teachers learn not to move without orders or permission from the principal; the principal learns that he cannot leave "his" building, lest it disintegrate. So dependency immobilizes and distances teacher and principal when what they need to accomplish their important work is maximum mobility, responsibility, and cooperation.

A community of leaders offers independence, interdependence and resourcefulness. While much of the current literature suggests that effective principals are the heroes of the organization, I suspect that more often effective principals enable others to provide strong leadership. The best principals are not heroes; they are hero-makers.

Few of the tea leaves before us suggest that public schools are heading toward communities of leaders. But the important question is not what will our schools become but what might they be. There is a critical difference. The question of what will be implies the exercise of purely rational faculties, calling for trend analyses, projections, extrapolations and probability curves. A view of what could be is not confined to these means. It requires intution, creativity, morality, and vision along with reason. It opens inquiry from the realm of the probable to the realm of the possible. The realm of clear vision together with the realm of clear reason offers inventive, promising and powerful ideas.

A community of leaders is a vision of what might become a condition of the school culture, a part of the shared norms, beliefs, rituals and actions a the school. And a community of leaders is far more than a piece of a professional school culture. Without shared leadership it is impossible for a professional culture in a school to exist. Professionalism and shared leadership are one and the same.

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FOOT NOTES

1 From "The Goose" by Bob Stomberg, undated, unpublished.

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3 A Nation Prepared: Teachers for the 21st Century, New York: Carnegie Corporation, 1986.

4 Education Week, February 25, 1987, p.9.

5 Education Week, January 14, 1987.

6 Time for Results: The Governors' 1991 Report on Education, National Governers' Association, Washington, D.C., 1986.

7 I am indebted to Richard Ackerman and Jeannie Nicholas.

8 Ventures in Good Schooling, Washington, D.C., The National Education Association, and Reston, VA, The National Association of Secondary School Principals, 1986.

9 The Goose, Ibid.